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L E T T E R

TO THE

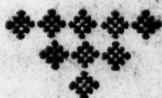
Rev^d. BENJAMIN ^KFAWCETT, M. A.

OCCASIONED BY HIS

P A M P H L E T,

INTITLED,

CANDID REFLECTIONS on the different
Manner in which the Learned and Pious
have expressed their Conceptions con-
cerning the DOCTRINE of the TRINITY.



L O N D O N :

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THE T. E. R.

TO THE

REVEREND BISHOP OF LONDON

OF THE

ERRATUM.

*In Page 21, Line 6, 7, of the Note, for " He made Daniel
" a great many Gifts," read " He made Daniel a great
" Man, and gave him many Gifts."*



Man, and gave him many Gifts.

LONDON

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at the University Press, London.



A

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

I HAVE read your "Candid
"Reflections, &c." with some
Attention.—Had they correspond-
ed with the *Title Page*, it would
have given me Pleasure; but, in my Appre-
hension, their Tendency is, to represent, in an
unfavourable Light, those who profess their
Faith in the proper Divinity of the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, as the only true and living
God, and the high Importance thereof. These,
for the Sake of Brevity, I shall call *Trinitarians*,
as you call those of different Sentiments *Uni-
tarians*; though I think the Term seems to in-
sinuate, that the Trinitarians believe a Plu-
rality of Gods, the contrary to which, you
know, they universally profess and maintain.
These appear to me to be the Objects of your
Censures, while the different Species of Unit-
arians are of your Candor.

A

Y^a

You blame your Trinitarian Brethren for using some Terms or Phrases, because they are not scriptural; particularly the Words *Trinity* and *Person* are represented as obnoxious in them, while unscriptural Expressions used by Unitarians seem to meet with no Disapprobation. Who, among the Number of the learned Divines, whose Creeds you have produced, seems so much as to aim at pure Scripture Language in his Attempts to convey his Sentiments on the Doctrine of the Trinity? And I fear many of late affect to use the Words of Scripture, with a Design to conceal their real Sentiments, and deceive such of their Hearers as hold different Doctrines from themselves. If there are such in the Ministry, it might be of happy Consequence for them, to enquire whether human Policy, or a Reverence of the omniscient God is the Ground of such Conduct? Far be it from me to censure the Use of Scripture Words! But, at the same Time, I think it unwarrantable to depreciate a Minister's Character for endeavouring to convey Scripture-Ideas in a variety of Expression; the Ideas conveyed by the inspired Writers should be attended to rather than the Words, the former are permanent and important, the latter as various as the Languages into which the Scriptures have been translated. Here allow me to observe, if only the Words or Sentences of Scripture were to be used in treating on religious

gious Subjects, the Importance of your Office to explain and apply the Word of God, would be greatly diminished, if not wholly superseded. I know it is not unusual for Antitrinitarians to object to these Terms, but I regard it as cavilling rather than reasoning, and did not expect to find you following them therein.

As to the word *Trinity*. If JEHOVAH, the one eternal Being, is represented in divine Revelation as subsisting in three, who have been usually spoken of as Persons, the Word will not be thought improper by those who know its Derivation and Import, *three united*, or *three in one*. Taking the Word in that Sense, I think your Quotation from Dr. Doddridge, a Gentleman no less regarded as a Critic than a Divine, will have Weight with you, as to the Propriety of the Word *Trinity*, though he does not make Use of it in that Passage. The Doctor's Words are, " The Scripture represents the divine
" Being, as appearing in, and manifesting him-
" self by, the distinct Persons of the Father,
" Son, and Holy Ghost, each of which has his
" peculiar Province in accomplishing the Work
" of our Redemption and Salvation, and to
" each of which we owe unlimited Veneration,
" Love and Obedience ". Though the Doc-

^a Page 12. The Pages referred to intend Mr. Fawcett's First Edition, till after Mention is made of his Second.

tor has not used the Word *Trinity* here, he speaks clearly of the divine Being in three distinct Persons, which you know to be all that is meant by those who make Use of that Term. The learned and pious *Dr. Waits*, whose Writings I have read, and whose Sermons I have heard, with Delight, uses the Word *Trinity* likewise without Hesitation.—Thus in his Hymns, Book III. No. 29.

“ Glory to God the Trinity,

“ Whose Name has Mysteries unknown;

“ In Essence one, in *Person* three;

“ A social Nature yet alone.”

So in his first Vol. of Sermons, Discourse XI. speaking of the Glories of God which are unknown to Reason, and the Light of Nature, he mentions “ *his Subsistence in three Persons;*” and in Discourse XII. speaks of “ the Blessedness of the Three glorious Persons in the “ Trinity ”.” I refer to these Authors, in
Support

‡ In a Note on the last-mentioned Sermon, the same Author writes, “ This Discourse was delivered twenty “ Years ago, and the Reader will observe some warmer “ Efforts of Imagination than riper Years would indulge on a Theme so sublime and abstruse.” But afterwards he says, “ Since I am fully established in “ the Belief of the *Deity* of the blessed Three, (though “ I know not the Manner of Explication) I dare let “ this Discourse appear now in the World, as being “ agreeable so far to my present Sentiments on the “ Subject.”

Support of the Use of the Words *Person* and *Trinity*, believing them to have been Gentlemen of the highest Rank in your Esteem. It would be easy to produce numberless Instances of learned Men of various Opinions, who have used the Word *Trinity*, which removes your Objection as to its Impropriety, but I shall only observe the Use of it in your *Title Page*.

Though the Word *Trinity* is not found in Scripture, yet I presume, there are several Passages which justify the Use of it by our Divines. I shall mention only two. In the solemn Ordinance of *Baptism*, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, (*Matt. xxviii. 19.*) religious Worship is paid, not to three Gods, but to the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three in one, which is the proper Meaning of the Word *Trinity*. And *1 John v. 7.* "There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." I wish the Gentlemen who seem so much offended at the Word *Trinity*, would furnish us with some other, more proper to convey the Idea contained in this Text. What the plain Meaning of it is, I leave to your own Reflections. I know the *Antitrinitarians*

"Subject." And, in the very Sermon to which this Note is added, he writes, thus, "As the blessed Three have an unknown Communion in the Godhead or divine Nature, so they must have an unspeakable Nearness to one another's Persons."

endeavour

endeavour to evade the Force of the Argument from this Passage against all their Schemes, by insinuating that it is an Interpolation, and not in some ancient Copies of the Greek Testament: But its Connection with what immediately follows, pleads strongly for its Authenticity, and, I think, it would be more consistent with Professions of Liberality of Sentiment and real Charity, to suppose, it was left out accidentally by some Transcriber, than to represent it as foisted in, by some zealous *Athanasian*, with a Design to serve a Turn; supposing the former to have been the Case, it may have been only an Instance of Inattention; but if the latter, it must have been from a very criminal Inclination, to add to the sacred Word of God something to support a preconceived Opinion. May it not, with equal Probability, be supposed, that the Passage was left out of some Copies with a criminal Design, as that it was put into others upon a like Principle? For myself, I think it more candid to believe, that if there was an Alteration, neither Party was so profane as to add to, or leave out of, sacred Scriptures, the Passage alluded to, with Design.

The Objection to the term *Person* is removed by the frequent Use of it with many respectable Writers. In your fore-cited Quotation from *Dr. Doddridge*, he speaks of "the distinct Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" and, in another Place, declares, that Scripture

ture represents " the Holy Spirit as a divine
 " Person, possessed of those Perfections which
 " are to be found in God alone ." Agreeable
 to which, *Dr. Watts*, in the Stanza transcribed
 above, says,

" In Essence one, in Person three."

To which may be added, that in the XIth Ser-
 mon of his two Volumes, speaking of " the
 " Glories of God, which are unknown to Rea-
 " son and to the Light of Nature," he particu-
 larly mentions " his Subsistence in three Per-
 " sons." The learned and ingenious *Mr. Ro-*
binson, in his *Plea for the Divinity of our Lord*
Jesus Christ, (Ed. 3d, p. 5.) expresses himself in
 these Words, " We do not propose a distinct
 " Address, in Prayer, to one *divine Person* ex-
 " clusive of another *divine Person*. The three
 " *Persons* in the Deity may be distinguished, but
 " cannot be divided." I apprehend the Per-
 sonality of the Father and the Son is admitted
 by all except the *Sabellians*, and *that* of the Spirit
 may be proved to the full Conviction of every
 attentive unprejudiced Mind; and therefore that
 the term *Person* may be applied to each of the
 three with great Propriety.

The Scripture abounds with Proofs of the
 Personality of the Holy Spirit. I will select a
 few out of the *Acts of the Apostles*. Chap. xiii. 8.

" The Holy Spirit said, " Separate me Bar-
 " nabas and Saul for the Work whereto I have
 " called them." Chap. xv. 8. " It seemed good
 " to the Holy Ghost and to Us, to lay on you
 " no greater Burden," &c. Chap. xvi. 6.
 " Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy
 " Ghost to preach the Word in Asia." Ver. 7.
 " They essayed to go into Bithynia, but the
 " Spirit suffered them not." Chap. xx. 28.
 " Take Heed to yourselves, and to all the Flock,
 " over the which the Holy Ghost has made you
 " Overseers." I think these Passages, with
 those which represent him as the Sanctifier and
 Comforter of the People of God; as inspiring
 the Prophets and Apostles; and as having
 formed the human Body of our Lord; not to
 mention many others of the same Kind—fully
 prove the Holy Spirit to be a *Person*; and, I
 apprehend, the obvious Sense of them inconsis-
 tent with the Idea, that by the Holy Spirit is
 only meant the efficient Power of God. Though
 so much is said of the Holy Spirit in the Old
 and New Testament, it is observable, that the
Antitrinitarians are almost silent about him; they
 leave us in the dark, as to this important Sub-
 ject. They deny his Deity, but do not state
 his Rank in the Scale of intellectual Beings;
 whether angelic or super-angelic, if there are
 Creatures above the Angels. The *Sabellians* in-
 deed speak of him as *the Power of God*.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding the *Trinitarians* maintain, that there are three Persons in the divine Essence, yet they assert the Unity of God, as firmly as any of their Opponents, and therefore cannot, without Injustice, be charged with Tritheism, but are *Unitarians* in the strict and proper Sense of the Word. These Truths they think are clearly revealed in Scripture, and that therefore it is perfectly rational to believe them on that Authority; though the Modus of the Existence of three Persons in the Deity, they acknowledge to be a Mystery, which God has not been pleased to reveal to Man: And perhaps it would have been well if some worthy Men had not attempted to illustrate or explain it. However, it is evident, that such Attempts have not been peculiar to the Trinitarian Writers, and, I apprehend, they tend to confound rather than edify an enquiring Mind. But, mysterious as this Doctrine may be, I cannot but think, that Some of the most learned and accurate of the Antitrinitarian Writers have advanced Sentiments equally incomprehensible. What can I think of a "derived Being which is not a Creature" (p. 11.?) Is our LORD's Existence *necessary*? If it is, he must have the very Essence of Deity; Necessary, or Self-Existence, being an Attribute peculiar to God. If his Existence is not necessary, he must be of the Rank of Created Beings. Is there any thing more mysterious than this

Notion of *Dr. Clarke* of a middle State of Existence, a Being neither Creator nor Creature; or, to use his own Words, that in the Son of God “dwells the Fulness of divine Perfections (excepting absolute Supremacy, Independency or “Self-Origination)”? *Discourse on the Being, &c. of God, &c. 6th Edit. (1725) page 184.* This induces me to think, that the *Doctor* was convinced, by the Force of Scripture Evidence, that our Lord Jesus Christ was superior to all Created Beings, but it being against his Conceptions and Reasonings, to admit of a Plurality of Persons in the Godhead, he for once substituted Imagination for Reason, when he adopted so strange a Sentiment.

I could not help being struck with the different Manner in which you treat *Arius* and *Athanasius*. You are very kind to the former, and willing to make the best you can of a bad Story about his Death; but where is your Candour and Moderation towards *Athanasius*? Do you discover a Disposition to admit any charitable Opinion of him; or rather, do not you try to blacken his Character, all you can? He was certainly esteemed, in his Day, a Man of great Eminence for his Abilities and Piety; and other learned and good Men have held the same Opinion concerning him, since his Time. But this same *Athanasius* was a great Opposer of *Arianism*, therefore that an *Arian* Historian should hold him up in a disagreeable Light, is
not

not more to be wondered at, than that *Arians*, in the present Day, should try to vilify him. What surprises me is, that such a Gentleman as *Mr. Robinson*, who pleads for the Divinity of Christ, should, on such Sort of Evidence, so fully give up *Athanasius*, and represent him as an "enormous Sinner;" though it is proper your Readers should be informed, that he has thought fit to leave out the words "enormous Sinner" in a subsequent Edition of his *Plea*. And what must I think, when a Gentleman of your Candour inclines so much to believe and propagate what is said against him rather than for him? After telling us, page 9, Note ^d, that *Mosheim* says, that "*Arius* died at Constantinople in a very dismal Manner," you introduce his *Translator* as saying, "after having examined this Matter with the utmost Care, it appears to me extremely probable, that this unhappy Man was a Victim to the Resentment of his Enemies, and was destroyed by Poison, or some other violent Method." Do you, Sir, wish your Readers to believe, that *Arius* was murdered by *Athanasius* or his Adherents, in a secret villainous Manner, because the *Translator* of *Mosheim's* History thought it probable, though he advances no Facts to support his Conjecture?

What is the Design of this Part of your Letter? Surely it would be beneath you to endeavour to stab the Character of a Man who has

been dead upwards of fourteen hundred Years. Is it then intended, by this Representation of his Enormities (which probably is all a Falshood), to throw an Odium on the Doctrine he defended? I cannot allow myself such a Supposition. He must be a weak Man indeed, who should conclude, that, if *Athanasius* was an "enormous Sinner" and a Murderer, therefore the Doctrines he held are false. It is not from the Characters or Authority of Men, but from the Evidence of the divine Testimony, that the Christian believes the Doctrine of the *Trinity*. However, to do you Justice, you inform us, that the persecuting Spirit is not limited to one Party, but that the contending Parties "grew so warm as to anathematize, "oppose, and even murder each other, on "Account of some or other of their unscriptural Phrases," p. 7. And I am of Opinion, that the intolerant Spirit, as well as the candid and charitable, are pretty equally prevalent in the Gentlemen you set in Contrast in your Letter. You know, Sir, how common it is for Gentlemen who compliment one another with being of liberal Sentiments, to represent the Orthodox, as they are called by Way of Contempt, as Men of narrow Minds and persecuting Principles. If you should favour the World with another Publication, I wish you would inform your Readers, whether or not the Persecutions by the *Arians* were less furious

rious and sanguinary than those by the *Athanasians* ^d?

^d The great *Mr. John Howe*, after mentioning "the
 " dreadful Persecution of the Orthodox by the *Arians*,"
 adds, " who persecuted the Orthodox (as one speaks,
 " writing of those Times) a great deal more harshly,
 " more severely, more horridly, than ever the Pagans
 " had done before them; when even all the World
 " was against *Athanasius*, and he alone was forced to
 " sustain the Brunt of the whole World!" *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest before the End of Time*,
 &c. published by *Dr. Evans*, p. 39. — And says the
 learned *Dr. John Owen*, " At the End of the fourth
 " and Beginning of the fifth Century, when the *Arians*
 " and Orthodox had successively procured the Supreme
 " Magistrate to join with them, Men were killed and
 " dismembered like Beasts: Banishments, Imprison-
 " ments, Plunderings, especially by the *Arians*, were
 " as frequent as in new subdued Kingdoms." To
 which he almost immediately adds, " The first Laws of
 " *Constantine* speak Liberty and Freedom. Pecuniary
 " Mulcts afterwards were added, and general Edicts
 " against all Sects, and so it" [" the Doctrine of pu-
 " nishing erring Persons with Death, &c. under the
 " Name of Hereticks,"] " is put over into the Hands
 " of the *Arians*, who exceedingly cherished it: yet for
 " a good while Pretences must be sought out, *Eustathius*
 " of *Antioch* must be accused of Adultery, *Athanasius*
 " of Sedition, Magick, and I know not what, that
 " a Colour might be had for their Persecution. The
 " *Arian* Kings in *Africa* were the first that owned it
 " openly, and acted according to their Persuasions.
 " Methinks I hear the Cries of poor dismembered,
 " mangled Creatures, for the Faith of the Holy Tri-
 " nity!" *A Complete Collection of Sermons*, &c. published
 by *Asty*, p. 229, 230.

Having,

Having, as I apprehend, in your Treatment of *Athanasius*, deviated from the Charity you so strenuously contend for, you are pleased also to attempt to depreciate the Character of *Calvin*,—that illustrious Instrument in the *Reformation*. “ Thus *Calvin* pleaded Conscience, when he “ persecuted *Servetus* to a violent Death,” (p. 32.) You seem to insinuate, that the Part *Calvin* acted in that unhappy Affair, was not from “ Conscience,” though possibly a misguided one, but that he acted contrary to his Judgment, from Party-Zeal, and “ pleaded “ Conscience” for his Conduct. It would have been candid, if you had impartially stated the Part *Calvin* acted on that Occasion, with its Circumstances. Was he President of a Spiritual Court that condemned *Servetus*; or was *Servetus* sentenced to die by the Civil Magistrate, executing the Laws of the State? Was it purely religious Opinions, or was it the Manner of propagating them, that was, in some Measure, the Occasion of his Sufferings? *Mosheim* says, “ CALVIN,—when SERVETUS had escaped from “ his Prison at *Vienne*, and was passing through “ *Switzerland*, in order to seek Refuge in *Italy*, “ caused him to be apprehended at *Geneva*, “ in the Year 1553, and had an Accusation of “ Blasphemy brought against him before the “ Council;” and a few Lines below gives *Servetus* this Character: “ His Faults were “ neither few nor trivial; since it is well known “ that

“ that his excessive Arrogance was accompanied
 “ with a malignant and contentious Spirit, an
 “ invincible Obstinacy of Temper, and a consi-
 “ siderable Portion of Fanaticism ”. I never
 heard one of *Calvin*’s Admirers attempt to
 justify his Conduct in this Affair; let him bear
 the Blame he deserves. It is admitted, he does
 not seem to have had those Ideas of the sacred
 Rights of Conscience and religious Liberty,
 which have spread in this Country in the pre-
 sent Century, but to have had some Remains
 of the Leaven of Persecution, that had influ-
 enced religious Professors, of all Denominations,
 in former Ages. In other Respects, I never
 heard *Calvin* deserved any other Character than
 that of a Scholar, a Gentleman, a Christian,
 and able Divine. I cannot see your View in
 introducing him in this Part of your Let-
 ter, unless to give you an Opportunity to lessen
 his Reputation, from a Dislike to some Doc-
 trines he laboured to propagate, at the Re-
 formation, with great Judgment and Success,
 believing them to be founded on the Word of
 God.

In page 30th you introduce a Quotation from
Grotius, “ If there be any one Point in the
 “ whole Compass of Christian Doctrine, in
 “ which it is easy, either to be in an Error, or

“ *Ecclesiast. Hist.* Vol. IV. p. 171, 2d Edit. (1768).

“ to be accused of being so, it is this of the
 “ Trinity;” and then proceed, “ Should many
 “ serious Christians be found in the Rank of
 “ such Accusers,—we need not be surprized.”
 Permit me to ask, Is it criminal to speak of a
 Person agreeably to what he declares himself
 to be, or I have good Reason to believe him
 to be? When a learned Minister has told me,
 with honest Freedom, that he believes *Jesus Christ*
 was no more than a good Man, and in Con-
 versation I call him a *Socinian*, is that immoral
 or uncharitable; do I murder his Reputation?
 If I speak of one who says, “ The Father,
 “ Son, and Spirit, are only the Names and
 “ Offices of the same Person,” am I a guilty
 “ Accuser,” if I call him a *Sabellian*? If, on a
 proper Occasion, I speak of any Man agreeably
 to his Profession, is it a Breach of Charity? But
 where is your Candour, to represent these
 “ serious Christian Accusers,” as having all their
 “ Ideas” [“ of the *Trinity*”] “ confined within
 “ the narrow Limits of a particular Party,
 “ and all their Ways of expressing it, dictated
 “ to them by their Catechisms and accustomed
 “ Forms of Worship?” Have these serious
 “ Accusers,” think you, never read their *Bibles*
 with some Attention, and learned to think
 and speak of the Object of their Worship with
 some Degree of Propriety? Do Parents who
 use *Catechisms* in educating their Children, teach
 them to believe the Truths contained in
 6 them,

them, on their own Authority; on the contrary, do not they recommend them, because they are Truths revealed in Scripture, and produce Scripture-Proofs in Support of the Sentiments they inculcate on the Minds of the tender Objects of their Affection and Care? That respectable *Assembly of Divines* who compiled our *Catechism*, were so far from wishing to have the Truths they advance believed upon their Authority, that they subjoin many Passages of Scripture in Proof of the Doctrines they inculcate.

I am free to declare my Opinion, that the Revelation God has graciously given us is for the Benefit of Christians of common Understanding, as well as for learned Men. Do we find that Men of Genius and great Learning have been uniform in giving the Sense of Scripture? You prove the contrary in the great Variety of Sentiments among such you have held up to View, (p. 8, &c.) respecting that leading Article of the Christian Religion, the Doctrine of the Trinity. Some of them indeed agreed, in Substance, as to the Doctrines, that God is One, and that this One God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in three distinct Persons, though they thought somewhat differently as to the Modus of this Distinction; while others of them denied the Doctrine itself, and agreed only in opposing what I believe to be the Truth, fully and clearly revealed in the Sacred Scriptures.

tures. May it not be feared these have too often exerted their Abilities, to explain away the genuine Sense of Scripture, rather than to embrace the Truths that are plainly made known therein, with Meekness, Love, and Humility of Mind? Do you wish your Readers to think, that the Divine Revelation is so vague, and its Meaning so obscure and uncertain, that the various and opposite Sentiments of learned Men are fairly deduced from it, by sound Reasonings and just Consequences, without pre-conceived Notions, which have too often led Men to reject the sublime Truths contained therein? Would not such an Opinion of Scripture imply an unbecoming Reflection on the Sacred Writings?

With what Severity do you indiscriminately charge your Brethren, whom you call "Accusers," who are Men of "liberal Education, especially Ministers of the Gospel," with Immorality, so great as to "murder the Reputation of others, by Charges without Proofs, or by plausible Insinuations of such Things as have no real Existence but in vulgar Prejudices? Is not this" (you add) *holding the Truth in Unrighteousness; not as it is in Jesus*, but as it is in the grand *Accuser of the Brethren*? Hath not such a Temper and Conduct a Tendency, in the most effectual Manner, to prejudice the Minds of young People, and especially of young Divines, against the very Doctrine it is designed to

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"incul-

“ inculcate?” Page 31.—I believe, Sir, you would have been nearer the Truth, if you had said, Men of a presumed Monopoly of Reason, Freedom of Thought, Charity and Benevolence, have beguiled many unguarded young Persons, young Divines as well as some elder ones, from what (I esteem) the most important Doctrines of Christianity, by Insinuations that they are contrary to Reason and the Divine Perfections, while, though they seem inconsistent with some Mens’ present Mode of thinking, they are perfectly consistent, in Reality, with solid Reason assisted by divine Revelation. How many hopeful promising young Men have been tempted to cast off the Principles instilled into them by pious Parents, from having been told, in a jeering artful Manner, that their Minds were shackled in their Education, who, to give Evidence that they are *Rational Men*, have eagerly swallowed the Bait, and embraced contrary Opinions, without seriously examining any one of them, either by Reason or Revelation !

I proceed to some Remarks on what you say to your Friend, at the “ hospitable Mansion that “ had often entertained — Company whose “ Censures of others, and particularly of their “ reverend Brethren, have occasioned not a “ little Pain to his candid Mind,” (p. 34). Must your Readers think, that the ungentle Part of the “ Company, whose Censures” are

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alluded

alluded to, were the *Trinitarian* Guests at the "hospitable Mansion?" It is possible, some of them may have offended against the Rules of Politeness, and perhaps of Propriety, yet, I assure you, if you know as much of one Part of Mankind as I do, you must know, that a censorious, uncharitable, contemptible, Way of speaking of others, on Account of different Sentiments, is not peculiar to the Gentlemen against whom your Letter is particularly pointed. It is, Sir, my settled Opinion, that a temperate Zeal in the *Trinitarians*, in Defence of their Principles, is not only innocent but virtuous, as they think the Belief of some Doctrines of the Gospel of great Importance to the Christian Life and Practice, while their Opponents freely declare their Opinion, that it is of no great Consequence what a Man believes, if his Life and Conversation be consistent with the Character of a good moral Man, and yet, at the same Time they attempt, by all Means, to propagate *their own* Sentiments with great Industry.

Were the Doctrines of Divine Revelation Matters of mere Speculation, I should esteem it a Thing of great Indifference, what a Man believes, but I am of a very different Opinion. The true Christian will have his Practice influenced by the Doctrines he maintains. For Instance, if he believes *the proper Deity of the Son of God*, and is consistent, he will pay him *Divine Religious Worship*, and not incur the Guilt
of

of withholding that Honour which is due to his divinely glorious Redeemer; on the other Hand, if he believes the Lord Jesus Christ to be but a *Creature*, how exalted soever, he either must refuse to worship him, or if he gives Religious Worship to him, incur the Guilt of Idolatry. The Idea of *Supreme* and *Subordinate Religious Worship*, appears to me to have no Foundation in the Holy Scriptures, though you seem to countenance such a Notion, by your Quotations from *Mr. Simon Browne* and *Mr. Richard Baxter*¹, (p. 82—84, second Edition.) The former of these Gentlemen has been pleased

¹ The Word *Worship* is used in Scripture in two Senses.
 “ It is sometimes put for *civil Respect*, and sometimes for
 “ *religious Homage*. In the first Sense, Abraham wor-
 “ shipped the Sons of Heth, (*Gen. xxiii. 12.*) and Nebu-
 “ chadnezzar worshipped Daniel, that is to say, he
 “ made Daniel a great many Gifts, declaring at the
 “ same Time, that Daniel’s God was GOD OF
 “ GODS, (*Dan. ii. 46, 47.*) But in the second
 “ Meaning, it is inapplicable to every Creature, and
 “ belongs to God alone. The Ideas of *supreme* and
 “ *subordinate religious Worship*, are unknown to the
 “ Holy Scriptures. *Thou shalt WORSHIP THE*
 “ *LORD THY GOD, and HIM ONLY* shalt
 “ thou serve, is a Law of all Ages, and belongs to
 “ Christians as well as Jews.” *Robinson’s Plea*, p. 25,
 Ed. 3. Suppose an *Antitrinitarian*, in his *Subordinate*
Worship of our Lord Jesus Christ, should express himself
 thus, “ I adore thee as Almighty God, in whom dwells
 “ the Fulness of Divine Perfections, (excepting ab-
 “ solute

pleased to inform his Readers, that "Worship
 " in general is nothing else but inward Respect
 " to a superior Being, in Proportion to its
 " known Excellencies, Rank, State, Power,
 " &c. expressed by proper external Signs."
 What the learned Gentleman's Design in this
 Definition of *Worship* was, I cannot pretend to
 determine; but, it may be conjectured, it was
 to defend the *Antitrinitarians* from the Charge of
 Idolatry, in the Worship they pay or profess to
 pay to our *Lord Jesus Christ*, by Virtue of a
 Divine Command, though at the same Time
 they believe him to be a mere Creature. But
 the Gentlemen who adopt that Notion would do
 well to consider, that it is as impossible for that
 God whose Command it is, (*Matt. iv. 10.*)
 "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and
 "Him only shalt thou serve," to command the
 Worship of a Creature, as it is for the God of
 Truth who "cannot lie," to command the
 Practice of Falshood and Deceit. And, by the
 Way, our being required to "honour the Son
 "even as we honour the Father," (*John v. 23.*) is
 so far from obliging us to worship a Creature,
 that his *Divinity* is the Reason of the Command
 to give him Divine Honour, and this Com-
 mand to "honour," or worship "the Son," is
 a strong

"solute Supremacy, Independency, or Self-Origina-
 "tion), these Divine Perfections are to be ascribed to
 "the Father only." What would you think of such
 Worship as this?

a strong Proof of his proper Deity. The foregoing Thoughts lead me to disapprove of what the learned and pious *Mr. Baxter* declares, "Had God bid me pray to Angels, I would not have refused it, but have taken it for my Honour." I should not have expected a Supposition from this great Man that implies an Absurdity; what greater one can there be, than for God to command, and forbid a Thing, at the same Time?

The Design of your Enquiries, (p. 72, &c.) is obvious to every intelligent Reader. "Why should not unscriptural Speculations be as tolerable in others, as in ourselves?" They certainly should be so; but not Matter of Pride to any, and not to be indulged without great Caution. "Have they not the same Right to exercise the Faculty of Imagination and Invention as we have?" Doubtless they have; but a fertile "Imagination," uncontrolled by proper Rules, has been of dangerous Consequence, and introduced much Confusion among Christians. "Is not Fallibility as inseparable from our Character as from theirs?" I admit it freely; but at the same Time wish you to observe, that this Question implies a very invidious and unjust Reflection on your Brethren; have you ever conversed with one of them, who had the Arrogance to pretend to "Infallibility?" "Have they not the same Right to interpret Scripture for themselves?"

Uncandid

Uncandid Insinuation! The Persons you reproach maintain the Right of Private Judgment, and of every Man's interpreting Scripture for himself; but they know that "Right" is not a Preservative against forming a false Judgment, or embracing and propagating even what are called, by an *Apostle*, "damnable Heresies," 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. Though the sacred Writer does not enumerate these "Heresies," except that capital one, "denying the Lord that bought them," certainly they were not innocent Errors, but of dangerous Tendency. This Text should guard Professors against an Indifference as to Truth and Error, and excite Ministers especially, to a serious uniform Concern for Truth, and to promote it with all the Zeal that is consistent with the Christian Temper.

After having proposed various Questions respecting your *Antitrinitarian* Friends, you proceed to ask, whether, "In all these Respects, they do "not justly claim our Esteem?" To this it may be replied, we do respect and "esteem" them, for every Virtue, every Excellence that adorns their Characters. Why then do you charge your Brethren with "bigotted and unfriendly "Thoughts of others?" But it is consistent with the apparent Design of your Letter. You further Query, "Are they not perfectly agreed "with us in acknowledging *One God, and One "Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ "Jesus?"* We agree in a Form of Words, but

but differ as much in Sentiment as in our Ideas of Creator and Creature. You proceed to ask, "Is not such an Agreement an infinitely stronger Bond of Union than any Mode of mere human Speculation or Expression?" Permit me to ask what you mean by a "Mode of mere human Speculation or Expression?" If you aim to make your Readers believe that the *Trinitarians* and *Antitrinitarians* differ only or principally in Matters of "Speculation or Expression," it is an Attempt to deceive them, as you very well know, the Subject of the Controversy is, whether there is one Person in the Godhead, even the Father, or whether there are three Persons in the Godhead, and the Son and Holy Spirit be God essentially equal with the Father, though personally distinct from him? I sincerely wish these Things were attended to in a Manner suited to their Importance. You further ask, "*what doth binder* — you Gentlemen in particular, from giving *them the Right-hand of Fellowship* in every ministerial Function?" If by *that* you mean or include, joining in *the Solemnity of their Ordinations*, I answer, A Gentleman exercising the Right of private Judgment, may, with the greatest Propriety, refuse to "*give the Right-hand of Fellowship*" to a Candidate for the sacred Ministry, who declines to give Satisfaction as to his Belief of the most important Articles of the Christian Faith, nor does Christian

D

Charity

Charity oblige any Man to a different Conduct. It appears to me to be inconsistent with that "Simplicity and godly Sincerity," which is required of us all, for a young or an old Divine, to conceal his Sentiments in Matters of Religion, especially if he prevaricates, or acts as though he wishes to have it thought he believes what in Reality he does not believe^r. I think it would occasion very uncomfortable Reflections in the Mind of a truly conscientious Minister, who believes the great Importance of the *Trinitarian* Doctrine, and others necessarily connected with it, should he knowingly, or even incautiously, bear a Part in the Ordination of a Gentleman in the opposite Scheme, who, it is reasonable to presume, will, in his future Ministry, endeavour to propagate such Sentiments as are, in the Opinion of the ordaining Minister, subversive of those which he thinks of the highest Importance in Divine Revelation.

I know it is said of Some, and I fear with too much Truth, that in Preaching they confine them-

“ There is an Art of subscribing one Thing, and believing another: of preaching that a Part is greater than a Whole, and believing that a Whole is greater than a Part: but this Art transforms the grave Minister of Christ into the fantastic Harlequin of the Stage; and an honest Man, however he may laugh at a Trick in the Theatre, is shocked at the Idea of a Knave in the Church.” *Rob. Plea*, p. 83.

themselves to *Practical*, and do not treat upon what they call *Controversial Subjects*. Let me ask, what Doctrine of divine Revelation is not a Subject of Controversy? And if such are not to be insisted upon, on proper Occasions, the Christian Minister, as he may be called, differs but little from a Preacher of *mere Morality*. I apprehend it may be said of such Ministers, "they handle the Word of God" partially, if not "deceitfully," 2 *Corinth.* iv. 2. not like the Apostle, "who did not shun to declare all the Counsel of God," *Acts* xx. 27. and was "determined not to know any Thing amongst the Corinthians, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." 1 *Cor.* ii. 2. If Christians are to be taught moral Duties only, for what Purpose are the peculiar Truths of Christianity revealed? I never could think it consistent with the ministerial Character, the Honour of Christ, and the Good of precious Souls, for a Minister to be deficient in Endeavours to establish his People, in what *he* apprehends to be the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel, however desirous he may be to inculcate moral Virtue; which I esteem truly amiable, highly important, and absolutely necessary. Does not the Christian Character consist in a Belief of the Truths revealed in Scripture, in Connection with the Practice of commanded Duties, under their proper Influence? It is my Opinion, if the Judg-

ment is erroneous, it will have a bad Effect on practical Christianity.

If I am properly concerned about the Salvation of my Soul, and believe, that the complete Righteousness of Christ alone is the Ground of a Sinner's Justification before God, that will be the sole Object of my Trust and Confidence; but if I believe my good Works are, in any Respect, the Way established in the Gospel for the Justification of a Sinner, *and act consistently*, I shall regard *them* as the Ground of my Acceptance with "God the Judge of all." If I think the *common, general*, Assistance of the Grace of God, sufficient to sanctify the polluted Soul, I shall be induced to trust too much to my natural Power; but if I believe the Holy Spirit is the Author, Promoter, and Finisher of Sanctification in the Souls of Believers, I shall see the Propriety, yea the Necessity, of a constant Dependance on his Operations on my Soul, to form me into the Image of Christ, and fit me for that State where nothing that is unholy can enter, or enjoy the pure Felicity of Heaven. If I believe Children are born perfectly free from what is usually called *Original Sin*, how can I, with the Psalmist, confess, "Behold! I was shapen in Iniquity," "and in Sin did my Mother conceive me;" *Psalm li. 5.* or humbly acknowledge myself to be, like the Apostle *Paul* and the *Ephesians*, who, we are assured, "were by *Nature* Children of
" Wrath,

“ Wrath, even as others?” I am persuaded, such Reflections as these have a Tendency to shew the Importance of believing the principal Doctrines of the Gospel, and to convince serious Minds of their being much more momentous than Many are willing to admit. They are certainly more than Matters of Speculation, and there is a real Difference in Men's *Sentiments* concerning them, not merely in their *Expressions*, or *Explanations*.

I have before me a Pamphlet, in my Esteem, very judicious, which, I am told, was wrote by the late pious and truly excellent *Mr. Joseph Williams*, of *Kidderminster*, who was an honourable Member of your Church. Its Title is, “ The “ Principal Causes of some late Divisions in “ Dissenting Congregations,” &c. As I hear you are collecting Materials, with an Intention of writing the Life of that worthy Gentleman, I hope to see proper Notice taken of this Pamphlet, wherein, after enumerating several Doctrines which he esteemed the Peculiarities of the Gospel, and the Truths of Divine Revelation, and expressing his Sentiments of the Manner in which they have been treated by some Ministers, he goes on, declaring these Doctrines to “ have been the received Doctrines of the “ Church of Christ in all Ages ;” says, they “ were strongly asserted by our Lord himself ;” and then, speaking of a Minister, concludes the Paragraph thus, “ If he, on the other Hand, “ preach

“ preach up the Religion of Nature, if he
 “ makes the Nature, Reason, and Fitness of
 “ Things, to be the chief and almost only
 “ Principles on which he builds the Doctrines
 “ of Religion, instead of the Holy Scriptures,
 “ excessively magnifying Benevolence, univer-
 “ sal Charity, and the Practice of social Duties,
 “ as the Sum and End of Religion, as what
 “ procures satisfying Peace and Pleasure in this
 “ Life, most nearly restores Man to his first
 “ and primitive State, is productive of the
 “ nearest Conformity to God, and in the best
 “ Manner secures and prepares us for the
 “ Kingdom of Heaven; we cannot esteem such
 “ to be Gospel Preaching, nor such Preachers
 “ the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the
 “ Mysteries of God.” Page 27.

You further ask, “ Why does not Love to
 “ Christ and his Members, and Zeal for the
 “ Honour and Interest of our common Chris-
 “ tianity, oblige us to maintain Christian Com-
 “ munion with them, on every Occasion, and
 “ without the least Interruption ?” (Page 74.)
 I suppose you mean with *those who differ in the*
most important Doctrines of Revelation. Permit
 me, Sir, to ask, what would be your serious
 Thoughts of a *Communion* of Christians, suppose
 at the solemn Ordinance of the Lord’s Supper,
 when the Belief of *the Object of their Worship* is
 so various and opposite, as is that of the *Tri-*
nitarians and *Antitrinitarians* ? What a Commu-
 nion

nion would that be, where some of the Communicants believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, consequently the Deity of the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost, others of them, “ that the
 “ Father, Son, and Spirit, are only the Names
 “ and Offices of the same Person, who was in
 “ Heaven called the Father, on Earth the Son,
 “ and, as exerting his Power on the Creation,
 “ the Holy Spirit;” some of them think, that Christ is “ a mere Man, and had no Exist-
 “ ence before his Incarnation;” others, “ hold
 “ Christ to be only the first and most glorious
 “ Creature of God;” and others persuaded, “ that there is one Supreme Being, who is the
 “ Father, and that the Son and Holy Ghost are
 “ two subordinate, derived, and dependant
 “ Beings?” Page 25th—28th. If a Church, composed of *Trinitarians*, cannot, consistently with their Consciences, receive *Antitrinitarians* into their *Communion*, it appears to me improper and uncandid, for the latter to desire to enter into such Churches, and if refused to be admitted, then to reproach them, as offending against the Rules of Christian Charity. Suppose some of all the Opinions that you have enumerated were present, what a strange heterogeneous Communion would this be! I think it may be said, it would be no Communion, except in the external Part of the Ordinance. In my present View of Things, I could not satisfy myself to join in such a *Communion* as this. It

appears to me very desirable, that Persons of different Opinions, respecting the *Object of Worship*, should associate with such Congregations as profess the same Faith with themselves. Such a Rule of Conduct, attended to, would have prevented many unhappy Divisions. I have maintained Friendship with several Gentlemen of very amiable Characters, who were *Antitrinitarians*, without Reserve, and have had a real Esteem for them, and should have been glad of Opportunities to show it by Acts of Candor and Charity; at the same Time, I must have had considerable Objections against joining with them in *Church Communion*.

I desire to entertain the highest Regard for true, genuine *Charity*, towards our Christian Brethren, though they may differ in Opinion. To wish and endeavour to promote their real Happiness, is the proper Exercise of it; but it is no Part thereof to soothe and compliment those who we think in an Error, though, I fear, it is too often practised, rather to procure their Esteem, than from upright honourable Intentions to promote the Cause of Truth. It is real Charity, by proper Means, with Decency and a Christian Temper, to endeavour to restore our Friends, when we think they are fallen from the Truth; but I know, from Experience and Observation, that Men of different Sentiments too often deviate from such a Rule of Conduct, and I have Reason to think, that none are more chargeable

chargeable therewith, than the Gentlemen who plead most for Charity, though it is easily known, it is for Charity to themselves, and at the same Time they are endeavouring to spread their own Opinions, while they treat others as Bigots, Enthusiasts, &c. and as Persons promoting Doctrines subversive of Religion and Morality; a most uncharitable, unjust Reproach, though easy to be refuted.

You inform us of some "Objections" made against your Letter. The first you mention in these Words, "Because the Word, Trinity, is represented as unknown to the *apostolic Fathers*, and the Abuse of it as displeasing to *Luther* and *Calvin*, I am therefore accused of attempting wholly to explode the Word itself," (p. 87.) Indeed, Sir, I do not wonder, that a Suspicion should arise in the Objectors' Minds, of your wishing and attempting to explode the Word altogether, as you evidently endeavour to explode the Use of it, in respect to what is usually called the Doctrine of the *Trinity*. But be that as it may, it is plain you dislike the Word, because, when it is used in "Prayer," "it tends to hide from Multitudes, the infinitely important and the only Way of obtaining Divine Forgiveness and Acceptance, even our coming to God for Mercy through his Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit." If I could think this a just Observation, I should have no better Opinion of

the Word than you have; but it is well known, that they who hold the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, understand this Way of approaching to God as well as others, and esteem it as highly, and perhaps insist upon it much more fully and clearly. They believe Jesus Christ to be God-man, and the only "Mediator between God" and Man," they also believe the Holy Spirit to be, not only a Divine Person, but likewise the Author and Giver of all Grace, and that his sacred Influences are necessary in all their Approaches to God. Add to this, that they commonly express this their Faith in their devotional Addresses to God; therefore how it can "hide the Way of coming to God through" Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit," I cannot conceive.

You need not have "endeavoured to prove" the Incompetency of any Phrases, fully to "express a sublime Doctrine of pure Revelation;" it is allowed by all, that Language is "incompetent" to that Purpose, and that the human Mind is incapable to form adequate Ideas thereof. As to your being "accused of a" Design to represent the Doctrine itself as of "little Importance," &c. I cannot pretend to ascertain the Degree of its "Importance" in your Mind, as you have not been pleased to indulge your Readers, by being explicit with Respect to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, or any other of the principal Doctrines of the Gospel;
yet

yet it is evident, from the general Scope of your Letter, that you think it of less Consequence, if of any, than many learned, judicious, pious Christians believe it to be ; and, if a Judgment may be formed from your Plan of *Communion* with all who “ acknowledge One God and One “ Mediator between God and Man, the Man “ Christ Jesus,” however different their Sentiments may be, it seems to be of no great Importance in your present View, whether they believe the great Truths of Revelation or not, provided they use the same Scripture Phrases.

“ It is urged,” you say, “ *as a parallel Case,* “ that the Doctrine of Divine Omnipresence is “ no more capable of particular Explanation “ than this of the Trinity. But the learned “ and ingenious Objector will be pleased to “ consider, that the former is a Truth of Na- “ tural Religion, while the latter absolutely “ depends on Revelation ; in which View the “ Cases are far from being parallel, (p. 89.) But is not “ the Doctrine of the Divine Omni- “ presence” a Truth ; are we not to believe it ; or is it of no Importance whether we believe it or not, though our Ideas are not, cannot be, commensurate to this Object ? I am at a Loss to see the Force of your Reasoning here. If a “ Trinity” of Persons in the Divine Essence is a Truth of “ Revelation,” and “ the Divine “ Omnipresence a Truth of Natural Religion,” both which are allowed incapable of a “ parti- “ cular Explanation,” is it more rational to believe “ the latter” than “ the former ?” Certainly

not. The Scripture, the Standard of Divine Truth, demands our Belief more than the fallible Reasonings of Men, as to what they call "Natural Religion." I have heard much of "Natural Religion," and believe, that Many think too highly of its Sufficiency, without the Assistance of "Revelation," and I have often wished the learned Gentlemen, who talk so much of it, would define it with greater Accuracy than I have known it done, as it appeared to me a vague Expression.

The proper Way to judge of "Natural Religion," is to observe what has been, and what now is, the Religion of the *Heathen Nations*, even of the most learned among them. Some of them had an Idea of a Supreme Being, and feeble Notions of some of his Perfections; but it is probable, these were obtained from the *Jews*. As there was an extensive Commerce carried on between the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, it cannot be doubted but they had some Knowledge of the *Jewish Religion*, and particularly of the first Principle of it, the *Unity of God*. Learned Men had formerly, as well as of late, a Curiosity to be informed of the Religion of other Nations, and it is probable some of them travelled into *Judea*, and obtained Copies of the *Hebrew Scriptures*. It is certain, these were translated into *Greek*, and it might be from them that some of the great Philosophers and Moralists among the Greeks, the Romans, and other Countries, derived the Sentiments which many seem to extol almost to Enthu-

Enthusiasm; though I have often wondered, that Men of such Genius and Application to Study, should not have obtained more rational Ideas of the true God, by contemplating the Works of Creation and Providence, but have invented such a Rabble of Deities, to whom they paid Religious Worship, that disgraces human Nature in its present State, and must lower the Ideas of its Dignity, in the Opinion of every considerate Man. However, let the ancient Sages have the Praise they have merited, the *modern* ones, who enjoy the Light of Revelation, have but little Reason to boast of their Discoveries; the solid *Principles of moral Virtue, the Being and Attributes of the Deity*, and the Doctrine of *Providence*, being so well understood among Christians of common Attainments, by the Instructions of the Holy Scriptures, It gives me great Concern, when I hear Men of considerable Abilities trying to prove, from what they call the Light of Nature, some great Truths that are clearly revealed in Scripture, while they avoid Arguments drawn from Revelation; and thus endeavour to exalt human Reason, and lessen Men's Regard to the Revelation of God himself. Rather let the gracious Author of the Light wherewith we are blessed above the Heathen Nations, be exalted in our sincere and most devout Praises on that Account.

It may not be improper to shew, in what a disingenuous Manner you have treated a Variety

riety of Authors you have quoted ; I shall instance a few only.

In your " first Edition (p. 23, Note 1,) you quote " *Calvin* " as having " explicitly declared, " I like not this Prayer, O *holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, have Mercy on us ;* " it savours of Barbarity. *The Word Trinity is barbarous, insipid, prophane ; a human Invention, grounded on no Testimony of God's Word ; the Popish God or Idol, altogether unknown to the Prophets and Apostles.*" The former Part of this Quotation differs from that in your 2d Edit. p. 78. And the latter Part of it, I am informed, is not found in *Calvin* ; which I am the more ready to believe, as you have left it out in that Edition. For what Reason it was introduced in the first, you are the proper Judge. However, it appears from your Quotation in the second Edition, Calvin believed " *That there are three Persons in one Essence ;*" and if he disliked the Word *Trinity*, he approved of the Term *Person*. But, it is not clear to me, that Calvin disapproved of the word *Trinity*, so much, if at all, as of that Form of Address, " O *Holy Trinity, thou one God, have Mercy on us.*"

In Page 73, you speak of " the pious *Mr. Haliburton* " as " one of the most orthodox Divines of the *Church of Scotland*," and represent him " in the nearest Views of Eternity " as saying, " I leave this one Advice more to my Family, " that whereas we have a Prospect of divided " Times, and different Apprehensions and " Practices among Ministers and People ; be-

“ ware of interesting yourselves in those Dif-
 “ ferences, or entertaining Prejudices against
 “ Ministers upon the one Hand or the other.
 “ There will be faithful Ministers on both
 “ Sides, and on either Hand they will act, ac-
 “ cording to their Light, sincerely. Whoever
 “ shall weaken any of their Hands, will find no
 “ Peace in it at the Close of the Day. I love
 “ their Persons that differ from me, and I value
 “ what I see of God in them. But I am to *call*
 “ *no Man Master but Christ.*” *Halyburton’s Life*,
 p. 180, 194. As your Pamphlet treats princi-
 pally of the Sentiments of learned Men con-
 cerning the *Trinity*, and inculcates a Sort of
 Indifference as to what a Man may believe on
 that Subject, which you esteem Candour or Cha-
 rity, can you think that any of your Readers
 would not suppose, that the Words you quote
 from *Mr. Halyburton* were intended to recom-
 mend to his Family a high Esteem of Ministers
 differing from him, respecting the Doctrine of
 the *Trinity*? But if you had fairly quoted the
 Passage, all your Readers would have clearly
 seen, *that* was not what the good Man intended
 in his dying Advice to his Family, but a Thing
 of quite a different Nature; viz. *an Oath* re-
 quired to be taken; about *this*, wise and ex-
 cellent Men differed in Opinion, and conse-
 quently in Practice. Immediately after the
 Words in your Quotation, “ Apprehensions
 “ and Practices among Ministers and People,”
 Mr.

Mr. Halyburton adds, " particularly about this
 " *Oath of Abjuration*," though you have for some
 Purpose, suppressed this Part of the Sentence.
 The Cause is to be suspected that needs such
 unmanly Attempts to support it.

You are pleased to quote *Dr. Owen*, (p. 83)
 as affirming " The Command of God is the
 " Ground and Reason of all religious Worship.
 " The Angels are to worship the Lord Christ,
 " the Mediator; and the Ground of their so
 " doing is God's Command. He saith, *Worship*
 " *him, all ye Angels.*" (*Owen on Heb. Vol. I.*
 p. 98.) I presume you are well acquainted with
Dr. Owen's Writings, and I cannot think you
 are candid in the Quotation, if thereby you
 would have it believed, that the *Doctor* thought
 the positive Command of God was the only or
 principal Reason for the religious Worship to
 be paid to Jesus Christ. Perhaps the *Doctor's*
 Sentiments may not be fully expressed in your
 Quotation, or his Meaning well understood.
 Let his Opinion be judged of as explained by
 himself, when professedly treating on the Sub-
 ject. " The Person of Christ is the Object of
 " divine Honour and Worship. The formal
 " Object and Reason hereof is the Divine Na-
 " ture, and its essential infinite Excellencies.
 " For they are nothing but that Respect unto
 " the Divine Being, which is due unto it from
 " all rational Creatures, regulated by Revela-
 " tion, and enforced by Divine Operations.
 " Wherefore

“ Wherefore the Person of Christ is primarily
 “ the Object of Divine Honour and Worship,
 “ upon the Account of his Divine Nature and
 “ Excellencies.” (*Owen's Glorious Mystery of
 the Person of Christ*, Chap. 9. p. 113, 4th Edit.)

Hence it appears, that the *Doctor's* Opinion, on
 this Subject, was, that the Command to worship
 our Lord Jesus was to inforce a Duty antecede-
 ntly incumbent on all rational Creatures,
 founded on the Divine Perfections of his Na-
 ture, and the Relations they stand in to him;
 and not merely or principally on a positive
 Command.

From the most mature Judgment I can form
 of your “Candid Reflections,” it appears evi-
 dent to me, that you have deviated from the
 Principles of *Moderation* which you profess to
 inculcate, and have shewn, not only a Want of
 Charity for many of your Brethren, but an In-
 clination to lessen their Reputation in the
 Esteem of professing Christians; to divert them
 from their serious Endeavours to establish their
 Friends in the Belief of those Truths which are
 the Glory of the Gospel; and to prevail with
 them to stand unconcerned Spectators of the
 Spread of Errors in the present Day, notwith-
 standing, to allude to your own Expression,
 “there never was a Time when the different
 “Species of Unitarians were more numer-
 “ous.” page 30, Edit. 1st. But so far as you
 succeed in this Attempt with young or un-
 wary

wary Minds, whether of Ministers or others; you are injuring the Cause of Truth and real Charity, and perhaps betraying the Truth, for which, I apprehend, you were an Advocate in Time past.

It is probable, Sir, Paternal Affection may have betrayed you to hold up your Trinitarian Brethren to the Public in an unfavourable, if not in an unjust Light; as it is known, you were disgusted at a Circumstance that happened the Day of your Son's Ordination at Beamister. Mr. R——, of Bridport, was invited by Letter from the young Gentleman to take Part in the Solemnity; which was received only the Evening before.—Mr. R—— is a Gentleman of established Reputation, whose Conduct is regulated by Deliberation. It is a settled Point with him, not to be active in ordaining a Minister, without being satisfied, respecting his Belief of what he thinks to be the principal Doctrines of the Gospel, particularly *The Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Mr. R—— went from Bridport to Beamister to converse with your Son. On taking the Freedom to ask his Sentiments concerning the Divinity of our Lord, the young Gentleman read out of his Confession of Faith a short Article concerning Christ, wherein was this scriptural Expression, “In him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Mr. R—— knowing, that even a Socinian would declare his Faith in such Scripture Language,

guage, requested some Explanation, and asked, "whether or not he believed that Jesus Christ "is God and Man, and that in his superior "Nature he is God in the highest Sense of the "Word?" The Reply was to this Import, "I do not believe it; for if that was my Sentiment, I must believe that there are two "Gods." The Result of this, and some other Conversation of the like Tenor, was, that *Mr. R——* declined bearing an active Part in the Ordination, or to sign the Certificate, not because, *Mr. Fawcett used Scripture Phrases in his Confession of Faith*, as has been suggested, but because, from what passed in Conversation, *Mr. R——* "could not but conclude the young Divine "did not believe the real Divinity of our great "and glorious Redeemer." *Mr. R——* has been censured, on Account of *the Time* of this Conversation, though he took the earliest Opportunity for it; and perhaps some Gentlemen who are Judges of Propriety in Behaviour, may think he has Reason to complain for not being acquainted sooner with the Request made to him. *Mr. R——* lives some Miles from *Beamister*; he received *Mr. Fawcett's* Letter of Invitation the Evening before the Day of Ordination, and therefore had no Opportunity of conversing with *Mr. Fawcett* but in the Morning before that Service.

Permit me, Sir, to ask, Has not *Mr. R——* the Right of private Judgment, which you justly

contend for; is he not bound, as an honest Man, to act accordingly; and could he, consistently, have assisted in the Ordination of a Minister, who, he had so much Reason to think would, in Conformity to his declared Sentiments, propagate such Doctrines in his future Ministry as, in his View of Things, are derogatory to the Honour of our blessed Lord? I have heard, that, on this Occasion, you have wrote to one, or more, of *the London Ministers*, who have, in Consequence thereof, reflected, in a public Manner, on *Mr. R——*, with so much Severity, as perhaps did them no Honour; he has been reflected on as “stabbing
“the Character of a valuable young Minister;” but I wish it may be considered, whether such Accusations have not a Tendency to stab the Character of an elder Minister, and whether they arose from Candour, and genuine Christian Charity, or from Anger and Resentment, for which I cannot discover a just Foundation? Whether you have acted, on this Occasion, uniformly with your public Declarations of universal Moderation and Benevolence, I leave to your serious Reflections and the Judgment of others.

I have endeavoured to guard against any Thing that can offend a Gentleman of your Character; if these Observations should be thought worthy of your Attention, and be in any Degree a Means to animate your pious
Zeal

Zeal for the most important Doctrines of the Gospel, I imagine it may add to the Usefulness of your ministerial Labours, and the solid Comfort of your Soul. That such Blessings may be increasing to the End of Life, and succeeded with a Crown of immortal Glory, is the very sincere Desire of,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

A Lover of Truth and Candour,

THE END,

For the most important Doctrines of the
 Gospel, I imagine it may add to the Usefulness
 of your ministerial Labours, and the solid Com-
 fort of your Soul. I have such Blessings may be
 attending to the Word of Life, and intended
 to the Soul of Man.

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